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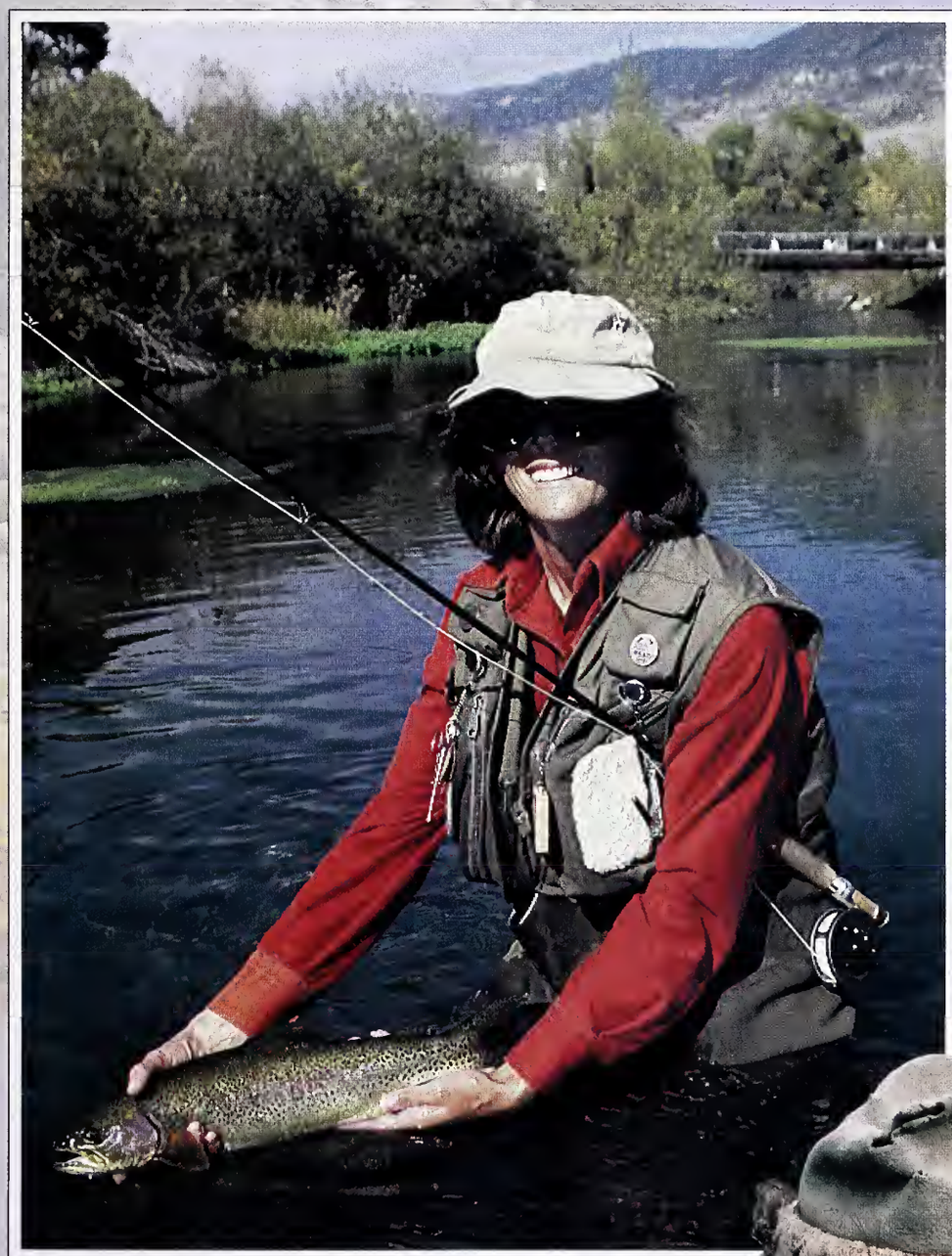
Montana

1993-94 Fishing Guide



Montana State Library
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In Montana, great fishing is a fact of life.

From legendary trout streams in the west to spectacular walleye reservoirs in the east, Montana is an angler's dream come true. Whether it's casting a dry fly to a wild trout, trolling a deep-running plug for some of the West's largest walleye, or simply drifting a baited hook through the ol' fishing hole, Montana has it all.

Montana has long been famous for superb trout fishing. The pure, cold water that rushes off the Continental Divide supports tremendous populations of rainbow, brown, brook, and cutthroat trout. Blue-ribbon rivers such as the Madison, Yellowstone, Big Hole, and Bighorn are known to trout anglers throughout the world. There are also the Beaverhead, Missouri, and Jefferson rivers; Rock Creek and Clark Fork; the Bitterroot, Flathead, and Kootenai rivers; Nelson's and Armstrong's spring creeks; and...well, the list goes on. The fact is, just about any little creek (we say "crick" out here) harbors trout–and sizeable trout, too.

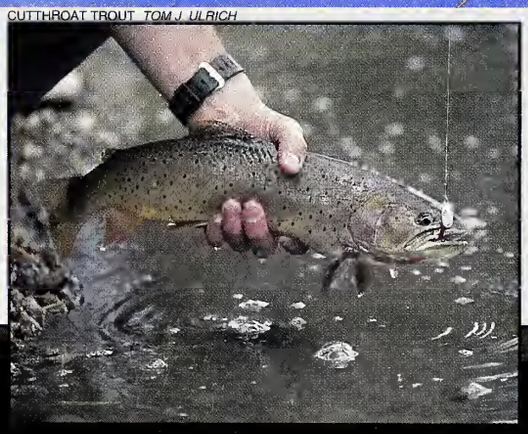
Numerous reservoirs and natural lakes also provide excellent trout fisheries. Try Canyon Ferry, Clark Canyon, Hebgen Lake, Flathead Lake, or the international Lake Koocanusa, where fish swim between British Columbia and Montana. Along with trout, many lakes contain kokanee salmon, yellow perch, largemouth bass, and northern pike. For adventuresome anglers, Montana's breathtaking mountains harbor countless high-country lakes accessible by foot or horseback.

YOUNG FLY FISHER *MIKE JAVORKA*

On Montana's central and eastern plains, trout are replaced by warmwater species such as sauger, smallmouth bass, channel catfish, and even paddlefish, a prehistoric-looking fish that still spawns in the lower Yellowstone and Missouri rivers. Two huge reservoirs, Fort Peck Lake and Bighorn Lake, grow tremendous walleye, along with several other species.

Wherever you are in Montana, collect your fishing gear and head for the nearest stream or lake. Chances are, you'll find great fishing.

CUTTHROAT TROUT *TOM J. ULRICH*

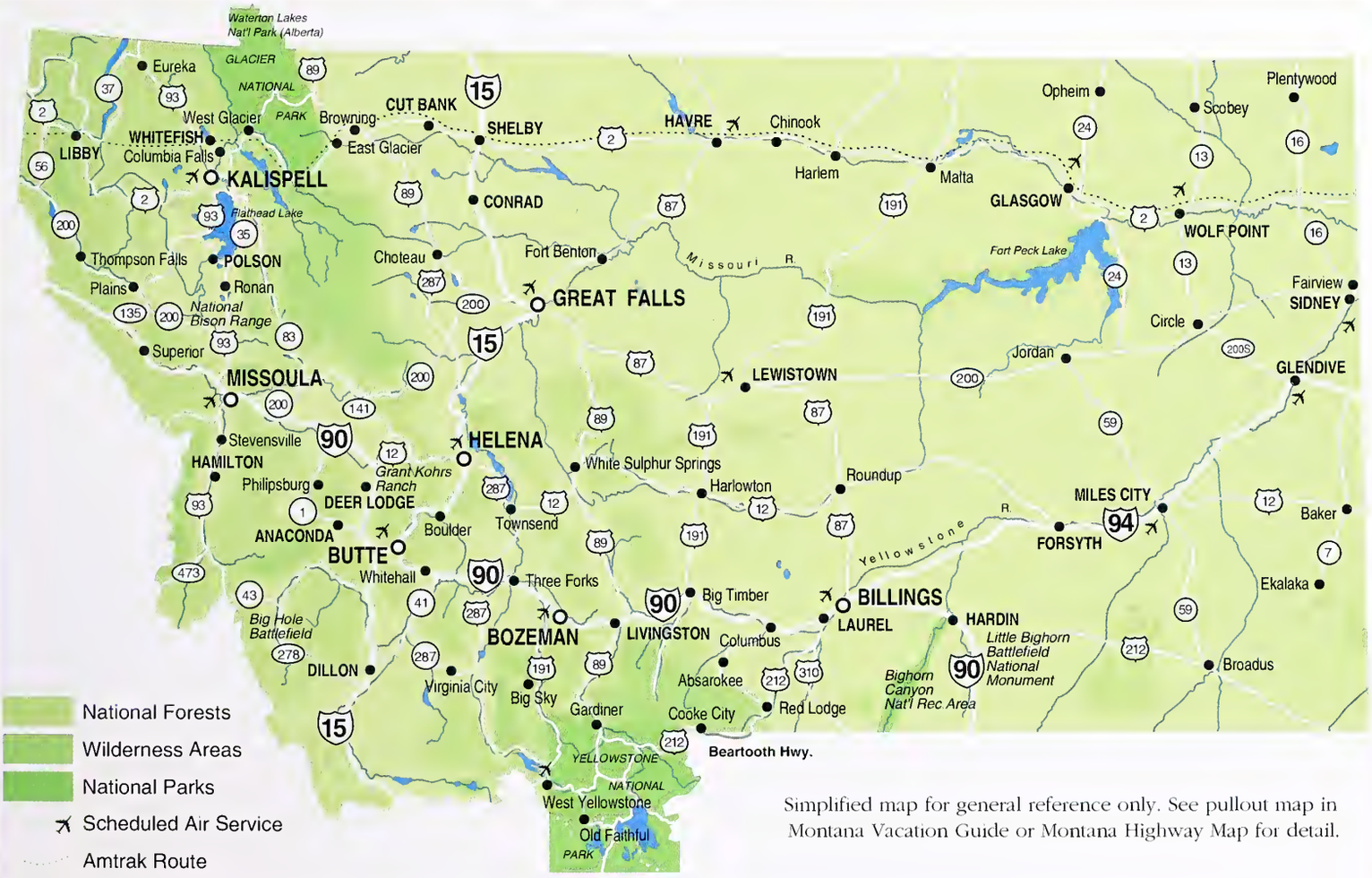


ANGLERS' EVENING *LARRY MAYER*

IN THE NET *PAUL UPDIKE*

How to use this guide.

To help you find the best fishing in Montana, we've divided the state into six "countries." From west to east, there's Glacier, Gold West, Charlie Russell, Yellowstone, Missouri River, and Custer countries. In this guide we describe each country, list the best streams and lakes found there, show their locations on a map, and describe fish species and recreational facilities at each stream or lake. More than 200 streams and lakes are listed here. We've also included useful information on fishing methods, license requirements, special regulations, and where to find additional information on Montana's fabulous fishing.



Simplified map for general reference only. See pullout map in Montana Vacation Guide or Montana Highway Map for detail.

For travel information or fishing on Indian reservations, call:

1-800-541-1447 (outside Montana), (406) 444-2654 (in state)

Travel Montana, Department of Commerce, Helena, MT 59620

The following publications are available free of charge:
Montana Golf Guide • Montana Lodging Guide • Montana Highway Map • Montana Recreation Guide
Montana Snowmobiling Guide • Montana Vacation Guide • Montana Winter Guide

This publication produced by Travel Montana in cooperation with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Front cover: Yellowstone River, *Michael S. Sample;* Angler and fishing hat, *R. Valentine Atkinson – Frontiers*
Back cover: Angler, *Larry Mayer*

Welcome to Montana . . .

Techniques and tackle

In Montana, fishing methods vary with the season, the type of water, and the angler's personal preference. Fly, spin, and bait fishing are all popular techniques, although the use of bait is restricted on some streams. In general, most fly fishers use five-, six-, or seven-weight rods that are 8 1/2- or nine-feet long, while spin and bait fishers favor medium-action rods with six- to 10-pound test line. Ultralight spinning gear is also popular.

Wading is the most common technique along streams and rivers. Hip boots are handy on small streams, but chest waders are needed on the larger rivers. Felt-soled wading shoes or boots improve traction on slippery stream bottoms.

Float fishing is increasingly popular on the larger rivers, but some rivers can be dangerous in high water. Inexperienced floaters always should inquire locally about river conditions and possible hazards. The best floating craft are McKenzie-style drift boats or high-quality inflatable rafts with rowing frames.

Motorboats are allowed on most lakes and on some larger rivers; smaller lakes and rivers may have restrictions on motorized water craft. Motorboat operators should always be alert for fast-moving storms and strong winds, especially on large reservoirs such as Fort Peck. All motorboats must have a valid license from Montana or another state or country.

Seasons

In Montana, you can fish year-round, but there are seasonal regulations and water conditions that affect fishing. In general, lakes and larger rivers are open to fishing all year, while smaller tributaries are closed in the winter. Even though spring run-off makes many freestone rivers high and muddy from May until late June, anglers still enjoy good fishing on tailwater fisheries, spring creeks, and some smaller streams. Fly fishers will find most waters in best shape from late June through October, although March and April can be good before run-off. Winter freezes the lakes in December and doesn't let go until March and April. Ice fishing is a popular winter sport.

Licenses

All anglers 15 years of age and older must possess a Montana fishing license. Licenses are sold at numerous locations, including sporting goods stores, some general stores and service stations, and all offices of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Nonresident fishing licenses are available in two-day increments or season licenses. There are special license requirements for youths under 15, residents 62 years of age and older, and for taking paddlefish. For a complete description of license requirements, fees, and fishing regulations, contact the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks or a license agent.

Fishing access sites

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks maintains more than 300 public fishing access sites throughout the state. Most simply provide parking and boat-launching areas, but some are equipped with toilets and camping sites. All sites are marked by the special hook-and-fish road sign, shown here. Other state and federal land management agencies also provide fishing access sites.

Species of special concern

Pre-settlement Montana hosted a diverse native fishery. Over the years, however, a number of fish populations have been placed in jeopardy by dams and other habitat alterations, the introduction of non-native fish, and overharvest. The westslope cutthroat trout, Yellowstone cutthroat trout, and grayling that once filled western Montana waters are now scarce in most of their native ranges, while the number of pallid sturgeon, an endangered species, in eastern Montana rivers is greatly reduced from historic times.

Recognizing the need to conserve Montana's native species, state fishery biologists have listed 16 kinds of fish as "species of special concern." Research and management programs are now being developed to protect and enhance these critical populations. The cooperation of anglers in complying with special regulations governing Montana's native fish will be vital to the species' survival.

Special regulations

Montana's fishing regulations generally allow liberal catch limits, but on some waters, special regulations are used to protect certain species and provide larger trout. Some blue-ribbon streams, including a 30-mile stretch of the upper Madison River, are subject to a "catch-and-release" regulation, which allows anglers to enjoy fishing but requires that all trout be returned to the water immediately after landing. Other waters, including portions of the Big Hole, Missouri, Smith, and Bighorn rivers, have "slot limits" which allow some harvest but require trout in a specified size class (generally 13 to 22 inches) to be released. Angling on these stream sections is often

restricted to artificial flies or lures only. By reducing the number of trout creeled, more trout are surviving to grow into trophy size of three pounds or larger, and anglers are reaping the rewards.

Stream access

Recreational access to Montana waters is generally excellent, thanks to a combination of public land in the upper watersheds, a network of accesses purchased by the state with fishing license fees, and the generosity of private landowners. State fishing access sites on most major rivers are spaced at five- to ten-mile intervals, allowing wading anglers key entry points and providing float fishermen with options for full- or half-day trips.

Montana law allows the public to make recreational use of rivers and streams between the ordinary high-water marks. Anglers can wade in a stream, walk along the streambank below the high-water mark, or float fish on any waters large enough to carry a boat. However, the law does not give recreationists the right to enter private lands bordering streams or to cross private lands to gain access to streams.

The success of the stream access law depends on recreationists and landowners cooperating on a basis of mutual understanding and respect for private property rights. For more information on stream access, contact the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

National parks and Indian reservations

Some of the finest fishing in Montana can be found in Glacier and Yellowstone national parks and on Montana Indian Reservations. These areas have their own regulations and license requirements, so anglers should contact the parks and reservations, or Travel Montana for information.

Glacier National Park
West Glacier, MT 59936
888-5441

Yellowstone National Park
Wyoming 82190
(307) 344-7381

Maps

Maps of fishing access sites on several streams are available from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Local tackle shops often distribute maps of their areas, and float maps for many major rivers are available for sale. Topographic maps, available at outdoor stores or the U.S. Geological Survey, are useful for backcountry anglers. The Montana Highway Map is available free from Travel Montana, Department of Commerce.

Outfitters and guides

For anglers who prefer to hire a fishing guide, Montana has some of the best licensed outfitters and guides in the country. Many tackle shops provide guides, but others operate independently as outfitters. Services vary from half-day trips to complete, multiple-day vacations. A complete listing of licensed outfitters is available in the Montana Recreation Guide, from Travel Montana. For more information about guided fishing trips, contact a local fishing shop or the following organizations:

Fishing Outfitters
Association of Montana
(FOAM)
Box 67
Gallatin Gateway MT 59730
763-4761

Montana Outfitters and
Guides Association
(MOGA)
Box 9070
Helena, MT 59604
449-3578

For more fishing information:

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

State Headquarters
1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
444-2535

FW&P Regional Headquarters

Region 1 - Kalispell
490 North Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
752-5501

Region 2 - Missoula
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59801
542-5500

Region 3 - Bozeman
1400 South 19th
Bozeman, MT 59715
994-4042/4043

Region 4 - Great Falls
4600 Giant Springs Road
P.O. Box 6609
Great Falls, MT 59406
454-3441/3442

Region 5 - Billings
2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings, MT 59105
252-4654/4655

Region 6 - Glasgow
Rural Route 1-4210
Glasgow, MT 59230
228-9347/9348

Region 7 - Miles City
Rural Route 1, Box 2004
Miles City, MT 59301
232-4365/4366

Region 8 - Helena
1404 8th Avenue
Helena, Mt 59620
444-4720

All Montana phone numbers are reached by area code 406.

Glacier Country

LAKE TROUT PAUL UPDIKE

FLATHEAD LAKE PAUL UPDIKE

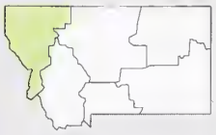
From some of the highest peaks along the Continental Divide to the lowest valleys in Montana, Glacier Country offers a wide variety of fishing opportunities and a spectacular backdrop of forests and mountains.

Trout are king in the swift rivers and streams that drain Glacier Country. The Flathead River and its forks host spawning runs of two natives–the colorful westslope cutthroat trout and the bull trout, which reaches weights exceeding 20 pounds. The Kootenai River provides wild rainbow trout fishing at its best, while the Bitterroot and Clark Fork are renowned for rainbow and brown trout. Flies or spinners are the most common tackle for streamside anglers, although bull-trout specialists cast large metal spoons or wooden plugs into deep runs and pools.

The broad valleys of Glacier Country host an array of productive lakes that contain trout, bass, and northern pike. Virtually all lakes are accessible from major roadways and feature public boat-launching facilities. Flathead Lake, the largest natural lake in the western United States, yields trophy lake trout, lake whitefish, and yellow perch. Other lakes with top angling reputations include Whitefish Lake, Lake Mary Ronan, Swan Lake, upper and lower Stillwater Lakes, McGregor Lake, Thompson Lakes, and Lake Koocanusa.

The high country of Glacier National Park and the neighboring Bob Marshall-Mission Mountains wilderness complex abound with alpine lakes and crystal streams where adventurous anglers can "pack in" to excellent trout fishing.

Some of Glacier Country's top fishing coincides with ice-out in the lakes, beginning in March in the valleys and extending to July in the higher mountains. Spring also brings the cutthroat trout spawning run in the Flathead River system. Midsummer is best for fishing most rivers and mountain lakes, while cooler fall temperatures trigger good fishing in the valley lakes. In winter, ice-fishing opportunities abound in the numerous lakes of Glacier Country.



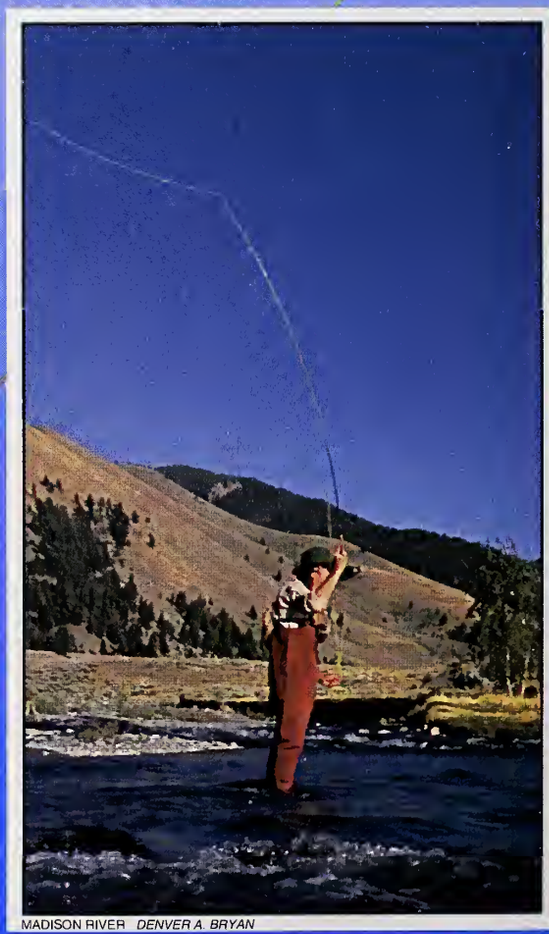
		COLDWATER SPECIES											WARMWATER SPECIES									FACILITIES					
RIVERS AND STREAMS	MAP NUMBER	Brook Trout	Mountain Whitefish	Lake Whitefish	Golden Trout	Cutthroat Trout	Brown Trout	Rainbow Trout	Kokanee Salmon	Bull Trout	Lake Trout	Arctic Grayling	Burbot	Largemouth Bass	Smallmouth Bass	Walleye	Sauger	Northern Pike	Shovelnose Sturgeon	Channel Catfish	Yellow Perch	Crappie	Paddlefish	Vehicle Access	Campgrounds	Toilets	Docks	Boat Ramps	Motor Restrictions
Bear Creek	1					●																		●					
Bitterroot River	2	●	●			●	●	●																●	●	●		●	
Blackfoot River	3	●	●			●	●	●		●														●	●	●		●	
Bull River	4	●	●			●	●																	●	●				
Clark Fork River	5		●			●	●	●		●				●				●						●	●	●		●	
East Fork Bitterroot River	6		●			●		●		●														●					
Fish Creek	7	●	●			●	●	●		●														●	●	●			
Fisher River	8	●	●					●																●					
Flathead River	9		●	●		●				●	●			●				●						●	●	●		●	
Kootenai River	10		●					●	●	●														●	●	●		●	
Lake Creek	11	●	●			●		●																					
Logan Creek	12	●	●			●				●														●	●				
Lolo Creek	13	●	●			●	●	●		●														●	●	●			
Middle Fork Flathead River	14		●			●				●														●	●	●		●	●
Ninemile Creek	15	●	●			●	●	●																●					
North Fork Flathead River	16		●			●				●														●	●	●		●	●
Rattlesnake Creek	17		●			●				●																			
Skalkaho Creek	18		●			●																		●					
South Fork Flathead River	19		●			●				●														●	●	●		●	●
Spotted Bear River	20		●			●				●														●	●	●			
Swan River	21	●	●			●		●		●														●	●	●			
Thompson River	22	●	●			●	●	●		●														●	●	●			
Tobacco River	23							●	●	●														●					
S. Fork Two Medicine River	24					●		●																					
West Fork Bitterroot River	25		●			●	●	●																●	●	●			
Yaak River	26	●	●			●		●																●	●	●		●	
LAKES AND RESERVOIRS																													
Ashley Lake	27					●			●												●			●	●	●		●	
Bitterroot alpine lakes	28					●																							
Blanchard Lake	29													●							●			●					
Bob Marshall Wilderness lakes	30		●			●				●																			●
Church Slough	31													●				●			●			●				●	
Clark Fork alpine lakes	32	●				●		●																					
Echo Lake	33													●				●			●			●	●	●	●	●	
Flathead Lake	34			●		●				●	●										●			●	●	●	●	●	
Foy Lake	35							●																●			●	●	
Glen Lake	36		●					●	●															●	●	●		●	
Handkerchief Lake	37					●						●												●	●	●			
Harper's Lake	38							●																●	●	●		●	
Hubbart Reservoir	39	●						●	●															●				●	
Hungry Horse Reservoir	40		●			●				●														●	●	●		●	
Lake Alva	41		●			●			●	●				●							●			●	●	●		●	
Lake Inez	42		●			●			●	●				●							●			●	●	●		●	
Lake Koocanusa	43		●			●		●	●	●			●											●	●	●	●	●	
Lake Mary Ronan	44					●		●	●					●										●	●	●	●	●	
Little Bitterroot Lake	45							●	●															●	●	●		●	
Lower Stillwater Lake	46																	●			●			●				●	
McGregor Lake	47		●					●			●										●			●	●	●	●	●	
Mission Mtn. Wilderness lakes	48	●			●	●		●																					●
Noxon Rapids Reservoir	49		●	●		●	●	●		●				●	●			●			●			●	●	●	●	●	
Placid Lake	50		●			●		●	●	●				●							●			●	●	●	●	●	
Rainy Lake	51		●			●				●															●	●		●	
Salmon Lake	52		●			●	●	●	●	●				●							●			●	●	●	●	●	
Seeley Lake	53		●			●		●	●	●				●							●			●	●	●	●	●	
Smith Lake	54																				●			●		●	●	●	
Swan Lake	55					●		●	●	●								●			●			●	●	●		●	
Thompson Lakes	56						●	●	●					●	●			●			●			●	●	●	●	●	
Upper Stillwater Lake	57					●												●			●			●				●	
Whitefish Lake	58			●		●				●	●							●						●	●	●	●	●	

CLARK FORK RIVER *ROGER WADE/CLARK FORK RIVER LODGE*

Gold West Country

BLACKFOOT RIVER *MICHAEL S. SAMPLE*

RAINBOW TROUT *CHRIS CAUBLE*



MADISON RIVER *DENVER A. BRYAN*

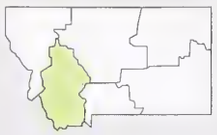
Each year thousands of anglers journey to the storied waters of Gold West Country in southwestern Montana. Here they find world-class fishing for wild rainbow, brown, and brook trout, plus native cutthroat trout, grayling, and whitefish.

The Madison, Big Hole, Missouri, Beaverhead, and Jefferson head the list of the region's best-known rivers. During spring run-off and until water levels drop in July, float fishing from inflatable rafts or drift boats is the preferred fishing method. By midsummer most waters can be effectively waded. Fly-fishing opportunities draw most anglers to Gold West Country, but bait fishers do well during the high, turbid waters of spring run-off, and spin fishers consistently take fish in summer and fall.

Of the smaller waters, Rock Creek is well known as a classic "freestone" stream with more than 50 miles of riffles, runs, and pools. Those seeking solitude can choose among the hundreds of willow-lined, beaver-pond-studded streams in Gold West Country.

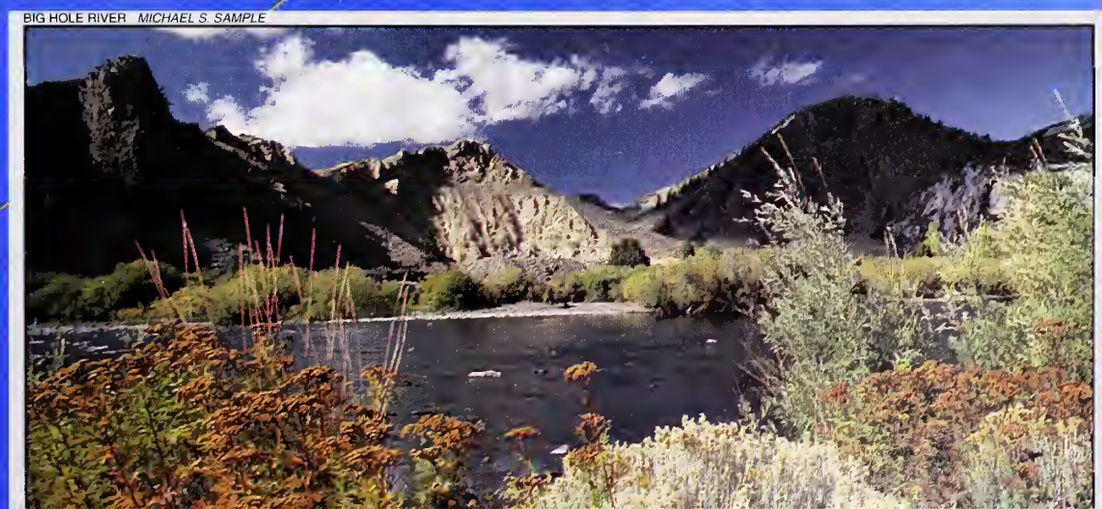
Several major dams in southwestern Montana have produced outstanding fisheries. Clark Canyon, Ruby, Harrison, and Hebgen reservoirs all offer fine fishing for browns and rainbows, while the highly productive Georgetown Lake hosts rainbows, brookies, and kokanee salmon. Natural alpine lakes in the East Pioneer, Madison, and West Big Hole mountains provide superb backcountry fisheries.

Summer is the most popular fishing time in Gold West Country, but more and more anglers are discovering the virtues of fishing either early (April) or late (October). The weather is pleasant–warming days in the spring and delightfully cool days in the fall–and the trout are hungry and cooperative. Winter anglers willing to drill through a foot or more of lake ice can be rewarded with excellent catches of perch, kokanee, ling, and trout.



		COLDWATER SPECIES												WARMWATER SPECIES									FACILITIES					
	MAP NUMBER	Brook Trout	Mountain Whitefish	Lake Whitefish	Golden Trout	Cutthroat Trout	Brown Trout	Rainbow Trout	Kokanee Salmon	Bull Trout	Lake Trout	Arctic Grayling	Burbot	Largemouth Bass	Smallmouth Bass	Walleye	Sauger	Northern Pike	Shovelnose Sturgeon	Channel Catfish	Yellow Perch	Crappie	Paddlefish	Vehicle Access	Campgrounds	Toilets	Docks	Boat Ramps	Motor Restrictions
RIVERS AND STREAMS																													
Beaver Creek	1						●	●																●	●	●			
Beaverhead River	2		●				●	●																●	●	●		●	
Big Hole River	3	●	●				●	●																●	●	●		●	
Big Sheep Creek	4		●				●	●																●	●	●			
Blackfoot River	5		●			●	●	●		●														●	●	●		●	
Blacktail Deer Creek	6	●	●			●		●																					
Boulder River	7	●					●	●																					
Clark Fork River	8	●	●			●	●	●		●														●	●	●		●	
Cottonwood Creek	9	●	●			●	●	●																					
Crow Creek	10	●						●																					
Dearborn River	11		●			●	●	●																●					
Jefferson River	12		●				●	●																●	●	●		●	
Little Blackfoot River	13		●			●	●	●																					
Little Prickly Pear Creek	14	●	●				●	●																●	●	●			
Madison River	15		●				●	●																●	●	●		●	●
Missouri River	16		●				●	●																●	●	●		●	●
North Fork Sun River	17	●				●		●																					●
Odell Creek	18						●	●																●					
Poindexter Slough	19		●				●	●																					
Prickly Pear Creek	20	●					●	●																					
Red Rock River	21		●				●	●																					
Rock Creek	22	●	●			●	●	●		●														●	●	●			
Ruby River	23		●			●	●	●																●	●	●			
South Fork Sun River	24	●				●		●																					●
Sun River	25		●				●	●																●	●	●		●	
West Fork Madison River	26						●	●																●	●	●			
Wise River	27	●	●			●	●	●					●											●	●	●			
LAKES AND RESERVOIRS																													
Bean Lake	28							●																●	●	●		●	
Branham Lakes	29	●																						●					
Browns Lake	30							●																●	●	●		●	
Canyon Ferry Lake	31						●	●					●								●			●	●	●	●	●	
Clark Canyon Reservoir	32		●				●	●					●											●	●	●	●	●	
Cliff Lake	33					●		●																●	●			●	
Coopers Lake	34					●																		●	●	●		●	
East Pioneer alpine lakes	35	●			●	●		●				●													●				
Elk Lake	36					●					●	●												●	●	●	●		
Elkhorn Mountains alpine lakes	37	●				●	●																						
Ennis Lake	38						●	●				●												●	●	●		●	
Georgetown Lake	39	●						●	●															●	●	●		●	
Gibson Reservoir	40							●																●	●	●		●	
Harrison Lake	41						●	●																●	●	●		●	
Hauser Lake	42							●	●												●			●	●	●	●	●	
Helena Valley Regulating Res.	43								●															●		●		●	●
Hidden Lake	44							●																					
Holter Lake	45						●	●	●							●					●			●	●	●	●	●	
Madison alpine lakes	46					●		●																					
Nilan Reservoir	47							●																●	●	●		●	
Park Lake	48					●						●												●	●	●			●
Ruby River Reservoir	49		●				●	●																●	●	●		●	
Twin Lakes	50	●									●		●											●	●	●		●	●
Upsata Lake	51													●							●								
Wade Lake	52						●	●																●	●	●	●	●	
West Big Hole alpine lakes	53	●			●	●		●			●	●	●											●	●			●	
Willow Creek Reservoir	54							●																●	●	●		●	
Wood Lake	55							●																●	●	●		●	

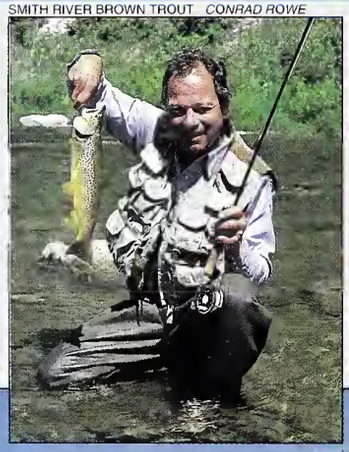
BIG HOLE RIVER *MICHAEL S. SAMPLE*

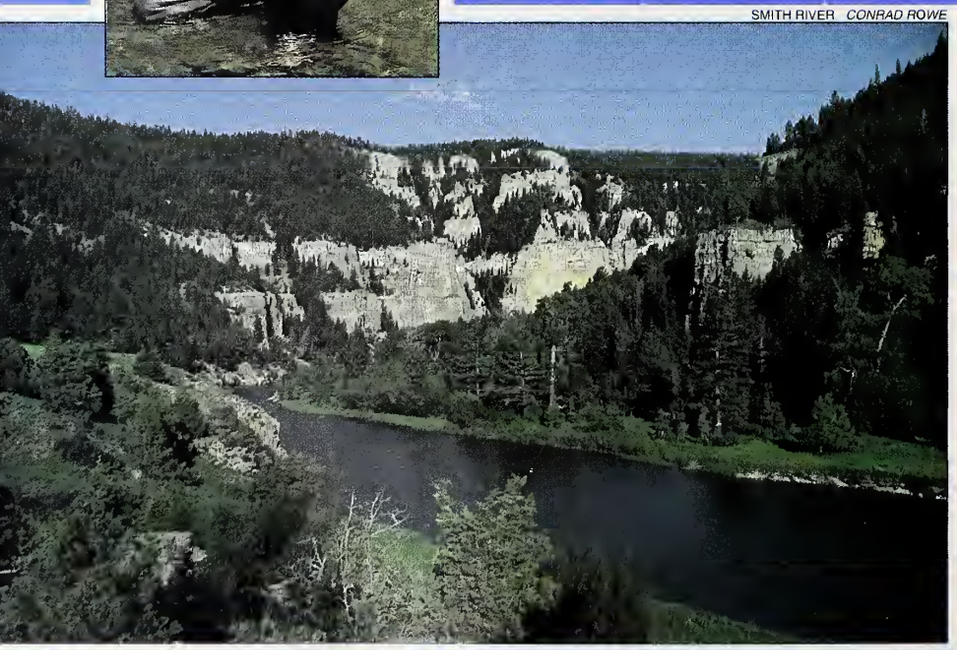


Charlie Russell Country

Sweetgrass
Shelby
Valier
Conrad
Choteau
Fort Benton
GREAT FALLS
Cascade
Belt
Neihart
White Sulphur Springs
Harlowton
Stanford
Hobson
Lewistown
Big Sandy
Havre
Chinook
Harlem
Milk R.
Teton R.
Marias R.
Missouri R.
Judith R.
Smith R.

Fishing Waters (see chart opposite page)
National Forests
Wilderness Areas
National Parks
Scheduled Air Service


SMITH RIVER BROWN TROUT *CONRAD ROWE*


SMITH RIVER *CONRAD ROWE*

LAKE FRANCES NORTHERN PIKE *NEAL & MARY JANE MISHLER*

Boasting a panorama of prairies, mountains, and awe-inspiring sunsets, Charlie Russell Country in north-central Montana offers a stunning variety of fishing experiences that range from remote wilderness adventures to easily accessible county parks.

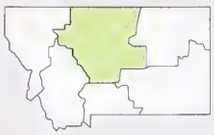
A popular float trip through the rugged limestone canyon of the Smith River combines spectacular scenery with excellent fishing for rainbow and brown trout. During the Smith River's short floating season from mid-May to early July, the 61-mile trip takes three to five days. Other top trout streams in Charlie Russell Country include Big Spring, Hound, Beaver, and Belt creeks, the forks of the Judith River, tailwater sections of the Missouri and Marias rivers, and the lower reaches of the Sun River.

Downstream sections of the Marias, Milk, and Judith rivers offer a wide variety of warmwater gamefish such as walleye, sauger, catfish, burbot, northern pike, and bass.

A float trip through the Missouri River badlands is a true western experience that takes from a few days to a week or more, depending on which stretch of this 150-mile "Wild and Scenic River" you select. Along the way is good fishing for sauger, channel catfish, shovelnose sturgeon, and goldeye.

Among the larger reservoirs, Tiber, Fresno, Bynum, and Lake Frances provide good fishing for northerns, walleyes, and perch. Beaver Creek Park south of Havre provides trout fishing in Beaver Creek and Bearpaw Lake, and fishing for walleye, perch, and huge northern pike in Beaver Creek Reservoir. Scores of small reservoirs dot the region, including several trophy-trout lakes on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.

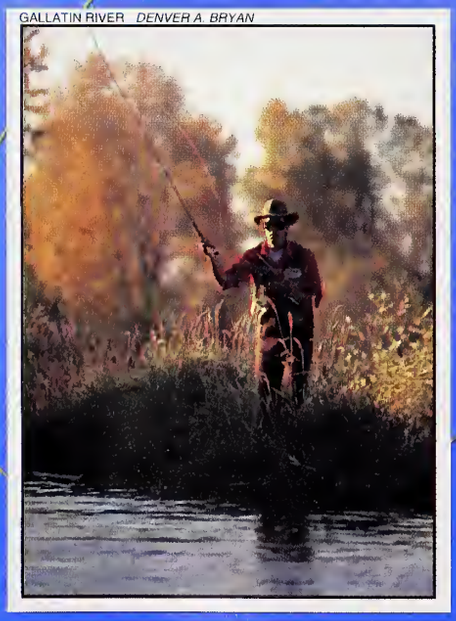
Ice fishing is good on most reservoirs and ponds, with several types of panfish adding to the winter action.



		COLDWATER SPECIES											WARMWATER SPECIES									FACILITIES					
	MAP NUMBER	Brook Trout	Mountain Whitefish	Lake Whitefish	Golden Trout	Cutthroat Trout	Brown Trout	Rainbow Trout	Kokanee Salmon	Bull Trout	Lake Trout	Arctic Grayling	Burbot	Largemouth Bass	Smallmouth Bass	Walleye	Sauger	Northern Pike	Shovelnose Sturgeon	Channel Catfish	Yellow Perch	Crappie	Paddlefish	Vehicle Access	Campgrounds	Toilets	Docks	Boat Ramps	Motor Restrictions
RIVERS AND STREAMS																													
Beaver Creek	1	●				●	●	●																●	●	●			
Belt Creek	2	●	●				●	●																●	●	●			
Big Spring Creek	3		●				●	●																●		●			
Hound Creek	4		●				●	●																					
Judith River	5	●	●				●	●																●	●	●			
Marias River	6		●				●	●					●		●	●	●	●	●	●				●	●	●		●	
Milk River	7			●				●					●		●	●	●	●			●			●	●	●			
Missouri River	8		●				●	●					●		●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Musselshell River	9	●	●				●	●																●	●	●			
Sheep Creek	10	●	●				●	●																●	●	●			
Smith River	11	●	●				●	●					●											●	●	●		●	●
Teton River	12	●	●			●	●	●																●	●	●			
Warm Springs Creek	13							●							●									●					
LAKES AND RESERVOIRS																													
Ackley Lake	14							●																●	●	●		●	
Bailey Reservoir	15													●				●			●			●		●		●	●
Bair Reservoir	16							●																●	●	●		●	
Bearpaw Lake	17					●		●																●	●	●			●
Beaver Creek Reservoir	18							●								●		●			●			●	●	●		●	●
Bynum Reservoir	19															●					●			●	●	●		●	
Crystal Lake	20							●																●	●	●		●	●
Deadman's Basin Reservoir	21						●	●	●															●	●	●		●	
Eureka Reservoir	22							●																●	●	●		●	
Faber Reservoir	23							●																●		●			●
Fresno Reservoir	24			●												●		●			●			●	●	●	●	●	
Grasshopper Reservoir	25							●																●					●
Lake Frances	26												●			●		●			●			●	●	●		●	
Lake Sutherlin	27												●											●	●	●		●	
Martinsdale Reservoir	28						●	●																●	●	●		●	
Newlan Creek Reservoir	29					●		●																●	●	●		●	
Petrolia Reservoir	30															●		●			●			●	●	●		●	
Pishkun Reservoir	31							●										●			●			●	●	●		●	
Reser Reservoir	32							●						●							●	●		●					
Split Rock Lake	33																	●			●			●					
Tiber Reservoir	34							●			●		●			●		●			●			●	●	●		●	

MISSOURI RIVER *DAVE BOOKS*

Yellowstone Country



GALLATIN RIVER *DENVER A. BRYAN*

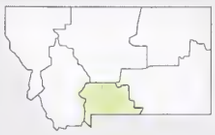
YELLOWSTONE RIVER *WILL BREWSTER*

Yellowstone Country in south-central Montana derives both its name and its considerable angling reputation from the Yellowstone River, the longest free-flowing waterway in the lower 48 states.

Along its course from Yellowstone National Park to Billings, the Yellowstone offers excellent fishing for native cutthroat trout, wild rainbows, wary browns, and mountain whitefish. Seasonal angling highlights include a prolific caddisfly hatch in May, the salmon fly emergence in early July, exceptional hopper fishing in August and September, and the October spawning run of large brown trout.

Among the Yellowstone's major tributaries, the Shields, Boulder, and Stillwater rivers receive the most attention. Expert anglers also test their skills against selective trout in Paradise Valley's famous "spring creeks," which charge a daily rod fee. The Gallatin River, the next major drainage to the west, is a classic mountain stream providing excellent fishing in a popular, scenic canyon. The East Gallatin River is a challenging, productive, brown-trout stream that meanders through willow-lined hay meadows west of Bozeman.

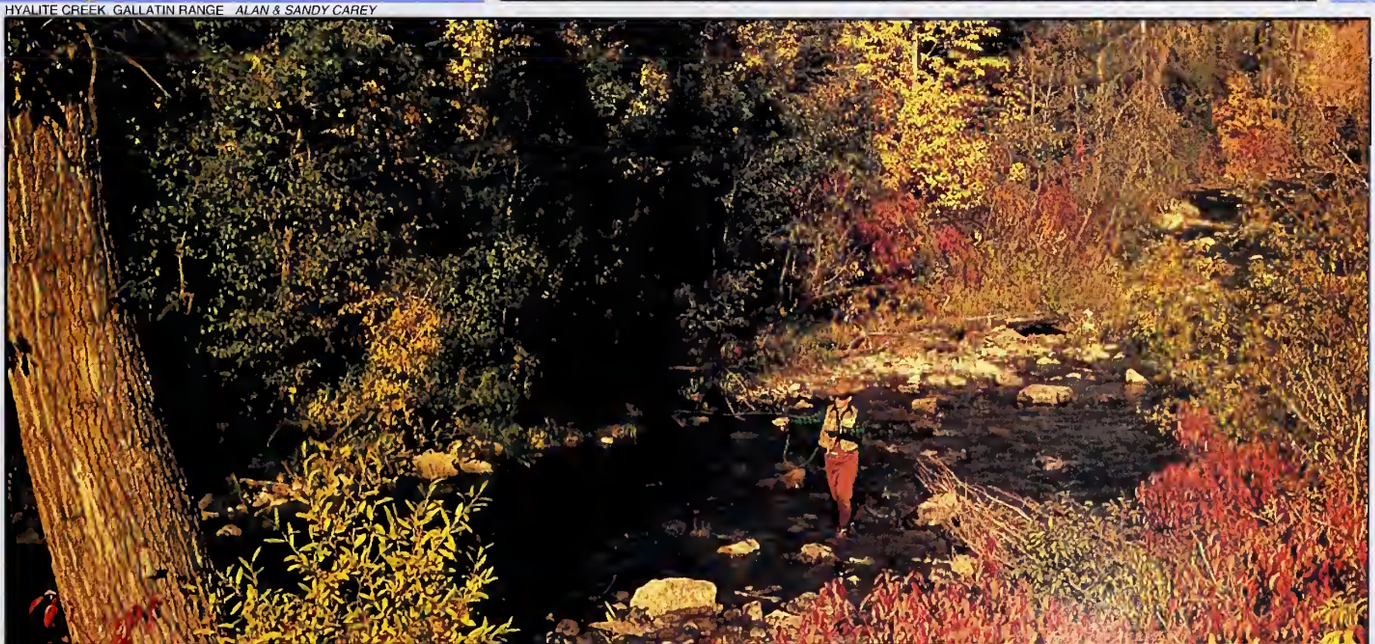
For many folks, angling in Yellowstone Country is not complete without a trip to the rugged Beartooth Plateau, a 10,000-foot-high alpine expanse just north of Yellowstone National Park. The plateau and the adjacent Absaroka Mountains host more than 400 lakes where backcountry travelers find cutthroat, rainbow, brook, and the elusive golden trout, along with matchless scenery. For those who don't tackle the high country, several top fishing lakes on the northern fringe of the plateau are easily accessible to vehicles and offer public boat-launching facilities.



		COLDWATER SPECIES												WARMWATER SPECIES									FACILITIES					
RIVERS AND STREAMS	MAP NUMBER	Brook Trout	Mountain Whitefish	Lake Whitefish	Golden Trout	Cutthroat Trout	Brown Trout	Rainbow Trout	Kokanee Salmon	Bull Trout	Lake Trout	Arctic Grayling	Burbot	Largemouth Bass	Smallmouth Bass	Walleye	Sauger	Northern Pike	Shovelnose Sturgeon	Channel Catfish	Yellow Perch	Crappie	Paddlefish	Vehicle Access	Campgrounds	Toilets	Docks	Boat Ramps	Motor Restrictions
Boulder River	1	●	●			●	●	●																●	●	●			
East Gallatin River	2	●	●				●	●																●					
Gallatin River	3	●	●				●	●																●	●				●
Grayling Creek	4					●		●																●					
Hyalite Creek	5	●				●		●																●	●	●			
Rock Creek	6	●					●	●																●					
Shields River	7		●			●	●	●																					
Sixmile Creek	8					●	●																	●					
South Fork Madison River	9						●	●																●	●				
Squaw Creek	10	●					●	●																●	●	●			
Stillwater River	11	●	●				●	●																●	●	●			
Taylor Fork	12					●	●	●																●	●				
West Fork Gallatin River	13						●	●																●					
Yellowstone River	14		●			●	●	●					●											●	●	●		●	●
LAKES AND RESERVOIRS																													
Beartooth Plateau alpine lakes	15	●			●	●	●	●			●																		
Cooney Reservoir	16						●	●								●						●		●	●	●	●	●	
Crazy Mountains alpine lakes	17	●			●	●		●																					
Dailey Lake	18							●								●					●			●	●	●		●	
Emerald Lake	19	●	●			●	●	●																	●	●			
Gallatin Mountains alpine lakes	20				●	●		●				●																	
Greenough Lake	21							●																●	●	●			
Hebgen Lake	22						●	●																●	●	●	●	●	
Hyalite Reservoir	23					●																		●	●	●	●	●	●
Mystic Lake	24	●				●																							
Quake Lake	25						●	●																●	●	●	●	●	
Three Forks ponds	26							●						●										●					
West Rosebud Lake	27	●	●			●	●	●																	●	●			
Wild Bill Lake	28							●																●		●			

EAST ROSEBUD LAKE, BEARTOOTH MOUNTAINS *MICHAEL CRUMMETT*

HYALITE CREEK, GALLATIN RANGE *ALAN & SANDY CAREY*



Missouri River & Custer Countries

Fishing Waters (see chart opposite page)
National Forests
Wilderness Areas
National Parks
Scheduled Air Service

Plentywood
Malta
Milk R.
Glasgow
Fort Peck
Wolf Point
Missouri R.
Zortman
Fort Peck Lake
Sidney
Circle
Jordan
Glendive
Musselshell R.
Roundup
Miles City
Baker
Forsyth
Yellowstone R.
Ekalaka
BILLINGS
Bighorn R.
Hardin
Tongue R.
Laurel
BIGHORN CANYON NAT'L RECREATION AREA
Ashland
Powder R.
Broadus
Ft. Smith
Decker

TONGUE RIVER JOHN REDDY

SMALLMOUTH BASS PAUL UPDIKE

Beneath the Big Sky of eastern Montana is an untapped treasure of angling opportunities. The crown jewel is Fort Peck Lake, a quarter-of-a-million-acre reservoir that stretches for 135 miles through the rugged Missouri River "breaks." One of the nation's best walleye fisheries, Fort Peck Lake is home to more than 40 species of fish, including sauger, lake trout, northern pike, channel catfish, smallmouth bass, and yellow perch. Bighorn Lake, a 70-mile-long reservoir confined within a spectacular, red-rock canyon, also provides good walleye fishing and a chance to catch rainbow trout, brown trout, and black crappie.

Other top-quality reservoir fisheries are Castle Rock Lake (bluegill, largemouth bass, and northern pike), Nelson Reservoir (pike, walleye, perch), Tongue River Reservoir (pike, walleye, sauger, crappie, smallmouth bass), and Medicine Lake, which hosts top-quality northern pike fishing in a nonmotorized setting. A good population of smallmouth bass attracts anglers to the Tongue River, a scenic prairie stream.

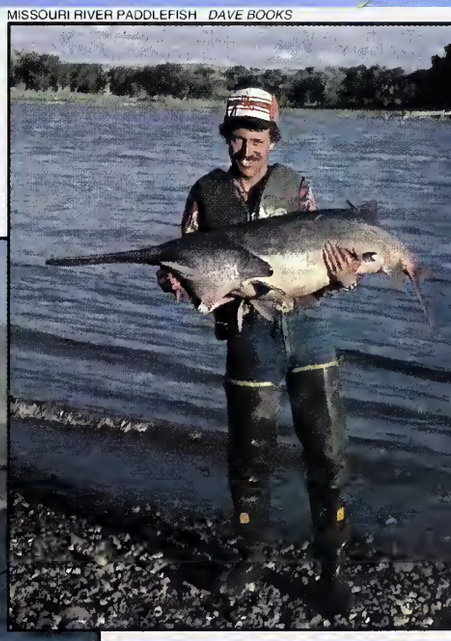
Missouri River and Custer countries also offer anglers the unique opportunity to catch a paddlefish, a prehistoric-looking fish which can weigh more than 100 pounds. Armed with stout casting gear and heavily weighted treble hooks, anglers gather at traditional hotspots on the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers to try to snag these giant fish during their spring spawning run. Shovelnose sturgeon, sauger, and big channel cats are also sought on these large rivers.

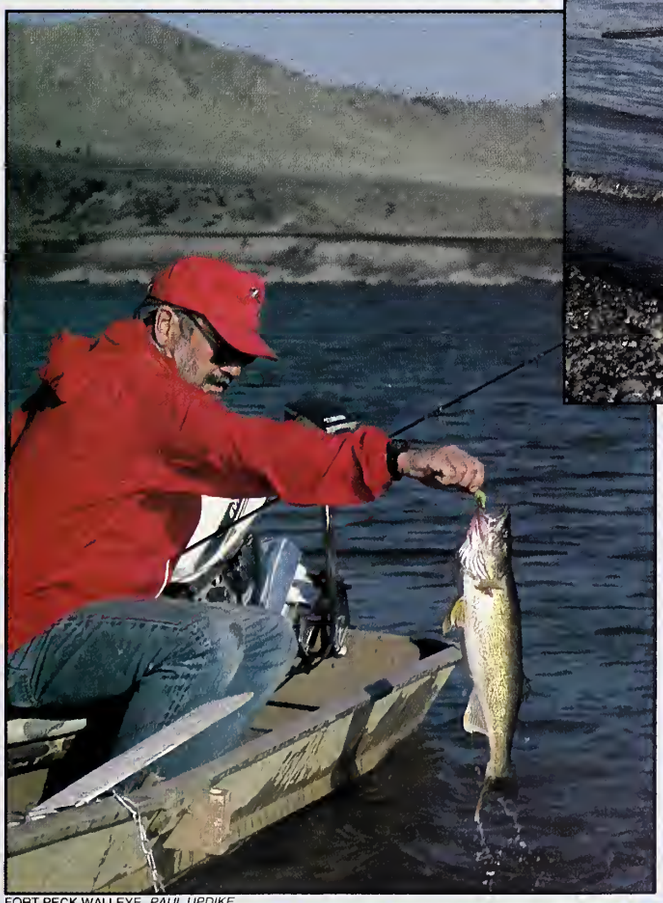
The Bighorn River stands in sharp contrast to the dominant warmwater fisheries of eastern Montana. Sustained by the coldwater discharge from Yellowtail Dam, the Bighorn boasts one of the world's best brown and rainbow trout fisheries. On a good day, an experienced fly fisher may hook several trout over 18 inches long.

A host of productive, small reservoirs completes the angling picture in Custer and Missouri River countries. A visit to the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks offices in Glasgow or Miles City is the best way to discover how to access these reservoirs and learn what species are present.

		COLDWATER SPECIES										WARMWATER SPECIES									FACILITIES					
	MAP NUMBER	Brook Trout	Mountain Whitefish	Lake Whitefish	Golden Trout	Cutthroat Trout	Brown Trout	Rainbow Trout	Kokanee Salmon	Bull Trout	Lake Trout	Arctic Grayling	Burbot	Largemouth Bass	Smallmouth Bass	Walleye	Sauger	Northern Pike	Shovelnose Sturgeon	Channel Catfish	Yellow Perch	Crappie	Paddlefish	Vehicle Access	Campgrounds	Toilets	Docks	Boat Ramps	Motor Restrictions
RIVERS AND STREAMS																													
Bighorn River	1		●				●	●					●		●					●				●	●	●		●	●
Milk River	2														●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			
Missouri River	3							●			●					●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	
Musselshell River	4		●				●								●					●				●	●	●			
Powder River	5																●		●	●				●					
Tongue River	6														●	●	●	●	●	●				●					
Yellowstone River	7						●	●					●		●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●		●	
LAKES AND RESERVOIRS																													
Bighorn Lake	8						●	●					●	●		●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	
Box Elder Reservoir	9																	●			●	●		●	●	●		●	
Broadview Pond	10							●						●								●		●					
Castle Rock Lake	11													●		●		●				●		●		●			●
Dredge Cut trout pond	12													●		●		●			●			●	●	●	●	●	●
Flat Lake	13							●																●		●			
Fort Peck Dredge Cuts	14										●					●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	
Fort Peck Lake	15										●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	
Glasgow AFB Pond	16							●													●			●	●	●			
Homestead Reservoir	17													●	●									●					
Kuester Reservoir	18																	●			●			●	●	●			
Lake Elmo	19													●						●	●	●		●		●		●	●
Lake Josephine	20													●						●	●	●		●		●			●
Laurel Pond	21							●																●					
Medicine Lake	22																	●						●	●	●			●
Nelson Reservoir	23															●		●			●			●	●	●		●	
South Sandstone Reservoir	24													●	●	●		●			●	●		●	●	●		●	●
Tongue River Reservoir	25														●	●		●			●	●		●	●	●		●	
Whitetail Reservoir	26																	●			●			●	●	●			●
Yellowtail Afterbay	27						●	●																●	●	●	●	●	

MISSOURI RIVER PADDLEFISH *DAVE BOOKS*





FORT PECK WALLEYE *PAUL UPDIKE*

"There are times for every angler when he catches fish because the fish told him he could; and times when the trout announce they are through for the day."

Thomas McGuane,
from *Montana Spaces* (L&B)

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